



Gloria Molina

**Celebrating
20 years
of Public Service**

December 17, 2002



IN LOVING MEMORY OF FRIENDS AND COLLEAGUES
WHO SHARED THE VISION, SUPPORTED, INSPIRED AND
WORKED ALONGSIDE SUPERVISOR GLORIA MOLINA.

WILLIAM C. "WILLIE" VELÁSQUEZ

GENEVA VEGA

PATRICIA "PAT" BOND

PAULA MACARTHUR

CAROLE THOMAS FAJARDO

HONORABLE JOHN FERRARO

JUDITH "JUDY" BOGGS

A HISTORY OF FIRSTS

FIRST LATINA
CALIFORNIA STATE LEGISLATURE
56TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT
1982-1987



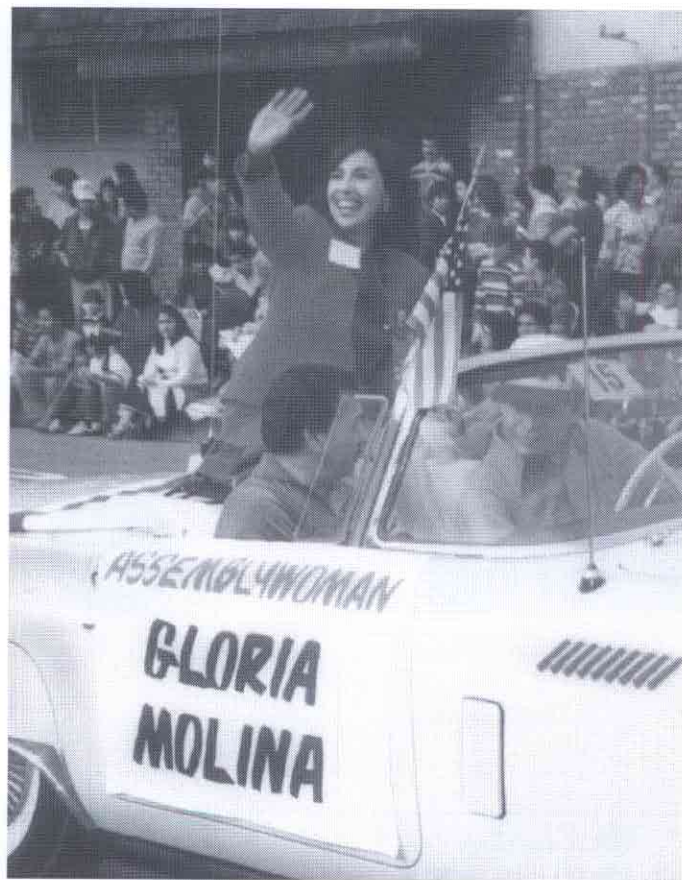
FIRST LATINA
LOS ANGELES CITY COUNCIL
FIRST DISTRICT
1987-1991



FIRST LATINA
LOS ANGELES COUNTY
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
FIRST SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICT
1991-PRESENT



C A L I F O R N I A S T A T E A S S E M B L Y



EMPOWERMENT

CALIFORNIA STATE ASSEMBLY

Gloria Molina made history when voters of the 56th Assembly District elected her to represent them in the California State Legislature in 1982. Her triumph immediately symbolized the growing might of the Latino electorate in Los Angeles. As the first Chicana elected to the legislature, her victory also marked the advent of Latinas rising to positions of formidable political power in California. Molina waged her Assembly drive much as she would her future campaigns: at the grassroots level and against the Chicano power elite's chosen candidate.

Upon winning her Assembly seat, Molina quickly developed an issue-oriented style. At the time, the constituents of the 56th District were facing plans by the State of California to build a prison in their neighborhood. Officials had already committed to the site—the Crown Coach bus yard—despite the fact that several correctional facilities already existed in the vicinity. Vowing that the 56th



District would not become a prison dumping ground, Molina immediately began organizing against the facility. This united effort resulted in the creation of the Mothers of East Los Angeles, the organization most responsible for mobilizing citizens to join the cause and which still exists today.

While serving in the Assembly, Molina also concentrated on a wide array of issues. She drafted bills to allow students at community colleges to transfer more easily to four-year universities. She initiated legislation outlawing discrimination against immigrants in obtaining auto insurance. And she played a central role in developing the Greater Avenues to Independence (GAIN) program, the State of California's first welfare-to-work effort.

Ultimately, however, it was Molina's lengthy but successful fight against the prison that made her a local legend. Indeed, this victory (considered a longshot by many) and her aggressive, tenacious style set the tone for her next political venture—the Los Angeles City Council.



LOS ANGELES CITY COUNCIL



EQUAL ACCESS

LOS ANGELES CITY COUNCIL

In 1987, Gloria Molina once again made history by becoming the first Latina elected to the Los Angeles City Council. As the official representative of the City's First District, Molina made it her number one priority to ensure that her constituents enjoyed equal access to municipal services.

Attaining this goal was no small feat. Over several generations, the citizens of the area—many of whom were members of low-income families—had become accustomed to receiving substandard treatment from the city.

With Molina in charge, this scenario changed quickly. She assigned staff to follow street sweepers in order to guarantee that the city honored its commitment to keep her District's streets clean. She directed her staff to accompany Los Angeles Police Department officers while they patrolled the neighborhood in order to obtain a better un-



derstanding of what circumstances law enforcement personnel faced while on the job and to ensure that officers treated her constituents fairly and courteously. She also created the More Advocates for Safe Homes (MASH) program to empower the community to hold city department directors accountable. City residents still use the MASH model today and Molina replicated the program upon being elected

to the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors in 1991. Molina also uncompromisingly confronted the proliferation of graffiti in the First District by creating the Graffiti Abatement program. In addition, she fought aggressively to combat illegal narcotics sales.

Without question, Molina's focus on "the basics" produced immediate, tangible results for her constituents.



LOS ANGELES COUNTY
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS



ACCOUNTABILITY

LOS ANGELES COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

It was “standing room only” when former Congressman Edward Roybal officiated at Gloria Molina’s swearing-in ceremony at the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors’ meeting room in 1991. Undeniably, Molina’s election was historic: she was the first Latina ever to join the powerful Board. However, the Latino community’s presence there was not always welcome. Indeed, less than twenty years earlier, Molina joined the plaintiffs in a class-action lawsuit to stop Los Angeles County from conducting forced sterilizations of Latinas. And it was the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund’s (MALDEF) successful lawsuit *Garza v. County of Los Angeles* that forced the county to redesign its district boundaries so that Latino voting power would not be diluted. The Supreme Court’s final decision provided Molina the opportunity to run for a seat that the Latino community had been excluded from for decades.

Molina’s entrance as a “fiscal watchdog” and her history of holding government accountable heralded fundamental changes within Los Angeles County. She began her tenure by saving taxpayers \$100 million by



eliminating pension-spiking practices. Although this was a sensitive issue within the Hall of Administration, the public heartily welcomed her efforts.

Molina’s healthy skepticism led to numerous other “good government” reforms, such as holding physicians accountable for failing to provide professional care, resulting in a reduction in medical malpractice costs. In addition, she developed comprehensive policies to combat sexual harassment in the workplace by strengthening the authority of the Office of Affirmative Action Compliance.

Molina’s ability to improve the delivery of quality health care services to the three million uninsured County residents is due in large part to her efforts to secure a \$1 billion federal waiver from President Bill Clinton in 1995. This funding rescued the county’s health care system. Moreover, she has fought to maintain quality services at LAC+USC Medical Center.

Similar to her agenda at the City Council, Molina also vigorously tackled crime and quality-of-life issues—particularly for the one million county constituents residing in the unincorpo-



LEADERSHIP

rated areas—by establishing multi-agency teams that confronted illegal operations, nuisance properties and gang hot spots. As a result, the unincorporated areas of her district currently experience the lowest crime rates in decades.

This commitment to force county departments to respond to all residents led her to aggressively crack down on illegal pharmacies. She also created the L.A. County Buyer Beware program, which protects consumers from deceptive advertising and overcharging practices. Her approach is always consistent—the County must “do its job” even if comprehensive problem solving does not fit into the existing departmental bureaucracy.

For Molina, her role as a county supervisor is not just to address problems but also to build and strengthen communities by providing residents with opportunities to pursue their dreams for themselves and their families. To this end, she led the Los Angeles River Master Plan efforts for the county, revamped El Bosque de Rio Hondo by restoring the natural area to its original form and linking the park with the San Gabriel Valley regional trail system, and partnered with then-State Senator Hilda Solis to create the San Gabriel Valley River Consortium. She also provided funding to upgrade and create vitally needed parks and libraries within the First District. And she expanded the child care capacity of the district by providing infrastructure grants and extending one of the first welfare-to-work programs that trains child care workers.

As Molina enters her fourth term as a supervisor, she continues to increase services and create opportunities for residents of the First District and countywide. Her current priorities include leading the effort in partnership with the University of Southern California to establish a Biomedical Park around the LAC+USC Medical Center. Many of the projects that Molina has fought for diligently



in her career are expected to come to fruition during her tenure, including the long-awaited Goldline Light Rail system that will link Eastside residents to Pasadena and to the rest of the City of Los Angeles from Union Station.

Molina is also working with community leaders to create the first Countywide cultural and arts center that celebrates the contributions of the Latino community to Southern California. It will be situated at the city's cultural and historical core—El Pueblo de Los Angeles—and will symbolize the important role Latinos play in the history and future of Los Angeles.

Molina's determination to be the best representative for her constituents has earned her three consecutive reelections as county supervisor. She will continue to fight for those she represents and will never forget that good public policy begins and ends with the community.

BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE



PLAZA DE CULTURA Y ARTE



FIRST STREET
LIGHT RAIL STATION
BOYLE HEIGHTS

A C T I V I S M

It was President John F. Kennedy's inaugural speech challenging Americans to ask themselves what they could do for their country that piqued young Gloria Molina's interest in politics. But it was the ensuing public school walkouts—comprised of Chicano students protesting the low quality of their education—combined with the 1970 Chicano Moratorium against the Vietnam War that motivated her to take action. She was inspired by Robert Kennedy, César Chávez, and Dolores Huerta to believe, "Sí se puede."

As a young woman, Molina was working with future Congressman Esteban Torres to prepare teens for the workforce when she concluded that voting Latinos into elected office was the best way to affect change in the community. So she took the next logical step by campaigning to elect Art Torres, and later Richard Alatorre, to the California State Legislature. However, she soon realized that despite these victories, one segment of the population still remained underrepresented—Latinas. Molina knew firsthand that the Women's Movement oftentimes did not relate to the unique circumstances Latinas faced. Simultaneously, she understood that the Chicano Movement's and Anti-War Movement's leaders did not adequately value the contributions made by Latinas. Consequently, she helped establish and became the first President of Comisión Femenil de Los Angeles, a Chicana feminist network and advocacy group still in existence.

While working for then-Assemblyman Art Torres, she became one of the first Latinas recognized by the White House when President Jimmy Carter appointed her to work as a Deputy Director of the Office of Presidential Personnel and then as a Congressional Liaison to the U.S. Department of

Health and Human Services. Once Carter's term ended, Molina returned to California to work for State Assembly Speaker Willie Brown.

With the notable exceptions of State Legislators Maxine Waters and Diane Watson, women—let alone Latinas—were absent from leadership positions. With the support of women of all backgrounds, Molina was ready to throw her hat into the political ring. The residents of the Eastside agreed. She won her 1982 campaign for Assembly and then her 1987 campaign for City Council with an overwhelming show of support. After being elected, Molina worked with beloved activist William C. "Willie" Velásquez to increase voter registration rolls and to specifically motivate Latino voters to become politically active. Bill Boyarsky of the *Los Angeles Times* mentioned in his 1989 article about Molina's unopposed City Council campaign that her intense voter registration drive demonstrated that even without an electoral challenger, she still understood the importance of energizing the electorate.

After Molina won her supervisory seat in 1991, she played a central role in supporting the congressional campaigns of numerous Latinos such as Lucille Roybal-Allard, Xavier Becerra and Hilda Solis, as well as Assembly Speaker Emeritus Antonio Villaraigosa. In 1992, she helped garner votes to elect Senator Barbara Boxer and President Bill Clinton.

In 1994, Molina worked tirelessly to build a statewide campaign against Proposition 187—the anti-immigrant initiative—by raising over \$1 million. She also worked against the subsequent initiative that sought to end affirmative action in California. And most recently, Molina co-chaired the Latino



MALDEF

**SU VOTOS
SU VOZ**

T E A M W O R K

effort to defeat the campaign to divide Los Angeles.

Molina continued to build civic participation by establishing the countywide César Chávez Community Service Week which encourages employees to honor César's memory by volunteering for a day in the community. This November, Molina volunteered at a local polling station to bring attention to the pollworker recruitment crisis.

Various national polls have consistently placed her as one of the most influential Latino leaders in the nation. In this role, Molina serves on boards of advocacy groups that seek to empower the millions of Latinos living in the United States. These include the Southwest Voter Registration Education Project (SVREP) and



Election Flurry
The Pace Is Hectic in 16-Week Race for Supervisor



the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF). Most notably, in 1996, President Bill Clinton and Vice President Al Gore asked Molina to be one of four national vice-chairs of the Democratic National Committee (DNC), where she is currently serving her second term.

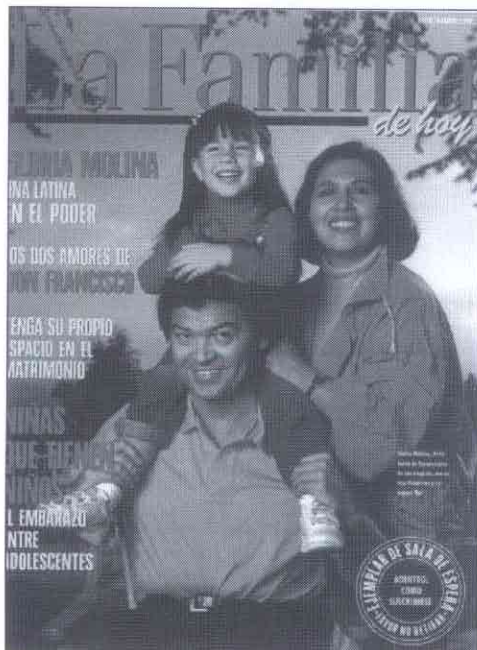
Molina continues to uphold the philosophy that institutions must be built that will continue to serve the community long after today's Latino elected officials are out of office. Indeed, Molina herself best expressed her legacy in a July 2001 feature in *Latino Leaders* magazine: "No one can tell us we can't do it anymore. No one can tell a woman she can't run for office. We have patted down the grass for a lot of people."



F A M I L Y



GLORIA AND HER PARENTS
CONCEPCIÓN AND LEONARDO MOLINA
AFTER HER CITY COUNCIL VICTORY.



GLORIA MOLINA 20TH ANNIVERSARY COMMITTEE

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